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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Please recycle

Observation of hate speech in Bahrain in 2017 (Former MP Mohammed Khalid as an example)*

Introduction

Former MP Mohammad Khalid is engaged in publishing media materials that incite hatred, violence and contempt for the beliefs of the Shiite community on the social networking site, Twitter. Despite criticism of human rights reports of hate speech, Bahraini officials continue to welcome him, which explains the prevalence of impunity enjoyed by those involved in inciting hatred in Bahrain. This is also the case for Head of Public Security, Tariq Al-Hassan, who is also involved in publishing hate speech. On the other hand, some citizens face prosecution for exercising freedom of expression on social networking sites, as happened to journalist Faisal Hiatt.

In 2017, 453 media materials and messages that incite or help to incite sectarian and political hatred and violence by former MP Mohammed Khalid were observed, culminating in 110 hate materials in January and 98 hate materials in May.

It is noted that in the materials he publishes, Khalid uses degrading expressions and gives the political dissidents the names and acts of animals. Moreover, he intends to publish insulting posts about the High Commissioner for Human Rights because of his comment on human rights issues in Bahrain. He also calls human rights activists traitors, spies and those who bray.

In addition, he publishes materials that insult the beliefs of Shiite Muslims, such as calling for trampling their beliefs, publishing words that insult the symbols of the Shiites, calling them worshipers of the idols, disbelievers and "*rafidah*" (rejecters), and insulting one of the senior Shiite religious references, SayedAli Al-Sistani.

It is noteworthy that Khalid called fornicating violence, including his call for chopping the bodies of the accused and feeding them to the dogs. Furthermore, he published a picture of three citizens who were executed after an unfair trial, which relied on confessions extracted under torture, and wrote on it, "I see the empty heads of the Magi has ripened and it is time to harvest them."

Insulting the High Commissioner

On 3/12/2017, former MP Muhammad Khalid tweeted, "I do not know why Bahrain over thinks the statements of the High Commissioner, who has proved since 2011 that he is a tool in the hands of the enemies… Let him bark and do not respond to his fables."On 12/12/2017 at 10:54 pm, he tweeted, "This so-called High Commissioner, who accuses Bahrain (falsely) that its human rights situation is deteriorating! - It seems that he failed in geography since he knows only Bahrain."On 3/19/2017,he tweeted, "In case the so-called "High Commissioner" arrived in#Bahrain I hope that he is given a lesson in Taqiya."On 3/16/2017, he tweeted, "Who thinks that the entry of the so-called High Commissioner to #Bahrain will make human rights shops and foreign countries pleased with us, is mistaken. And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you."On 16/3/2017, he tweeted, "Will the role of the High Commissioner who will visit #Bahrain (who is not welcomed) be a duplicate copy of Bassiouni who gave the mercenaries of Iran more "media flashiness"?

Undermining Human Rights Community

On 5/2/2017, Khalid tweeted photos of the Bahraini human rights activists participating in the Universal Periodic Review of the Bahrain Human Rights File and wrote, "The faces of betrayal and collusion that bray against #Bahrain in Geneva."On 8/24/2017,he tweeted, "Those who lie and promote the death chambers in the prisons of Bahrain know that they are 7-stars prisons, but lying and the blind loyalty to Iran and the Party of Satan are in their blood."

Trampling Shia'sBeliefs

On 4/24/2017,Khalid published a tweet bearing a hash tag that says, 'Sons of hatred created by the culture of Hussainiya," in addition, he re-tweeted a tweet by @tahadulaimi, which says, "The problem is withShiism, not with the Shiites. This is the umbilical cord, which makes the disengagement between the Arab and the Persian impossible, except by resorting to the mechanism of trampling." On 7/7/2017, Khalid tweeted, "Do not be surprised that #Bahrain someday becomes the third country in the world after Iran and Iraq in shrines and blessing of tombs… therefore we say wake up."

He also re-tweeteda tweet by @omar_madaniah, which says, "A senior Jewish Rabbi admits that the Jews were the ones who planted the Iranian #Sistani as a reference for the pagans and it is admitted by al-Haidari who wears a turban."Note that this tweet is meant for one of the senior religious references of Shiites, and he was called a reference for the "pagans"!

On 2/8/2017, he posted a tweet with an attached photo, saying, "Sheikh of Islam IbnTaymiyyahsaid,"The rafidahare the origin of all strife and misfortune, and many of the swords that were against Muslims were from their part. Ibn Saba was the one who invented the religion of the rafidah, and he was an infidel, atheist and an enemy of Islam and its people."

Assaulting execution victims and inciting violence

On 14/1/2017, commenting on the death sentences, Khalid tweeted, "Saudi Arabia carried out the punishment against the head of terrorism #Nimr_alNimrand did not pay attention to those who croak and bray, well done #Bahrain for punishing the followers and leaving the heads for the finale On 1/14/2017, he posted a tweet, which included photos of the victims of execution and extrajudicial killings, saying, "I see the empty heads of the Magi has ripened and it is time to harvest them." On 1/1/2017, he tweeted, "I hope to hear tonight about shooting the dogs of Iran with live bullets and leaving them like carcasses on the streets. This is the least they deserve after killing them."

On 2/26/2017, he tweeted,"If the security men of #Bahrain arrested the terrorists at the scene, they should shoot bullets in their heads instead of sending them to7-stars prisons."

On 11/11/2017, he tweeted,"We hope that the fate of the terrorists who blew up the oil pipelines after their arrest will not be 7-stars prisons. The least they deserve is the "piracy punishment" by chopping them into pieces, then executing them and throwing them as food for the dogs…The land of Bahrain is too pure to be contaminated by their stinking rotten bodies."

Recommendations

1. The Bahraini authorities should take immediate measures to end the hate speech made by state political figures and writers of press for their role in discrimination against Shiites.
2. Bahraini authorities must take measures to counter hate speech made by political figures and government journalists in the media and on social media.
3. Member States of the Human Rights Council should press the Bahraini authorities to harmonize domestic legislation with the 2008 Camden Principles and the 2012 Rabat Plan of Action, which call for prohibiting advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred.
4. Amend article 172 of the Penal Code promulgated by Decree Law No. 15 of 1976, to include the following: Punish anyone enjoying legal or illegal authority that practiced discrimination or apartheid in violation of the principle of equality and equal opportunities among citizens because of origin, colour, religion, sect, doctrine or political opinion; discrimination and apartheid in the article shall have the meanings set forth in the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the 1973 Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; if the perpetrator is a public employee or assigned for a public service, this shall be regarded as an aggravating circumstance; and the discrimination and apartheid shall be deemed to have occurred if an individual or a group of citizens is deprived of benefits, burdened by obligations, or labelled with labels that have non-specific criteria applicable to all citizens.

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*Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.